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ABSTRACT

Described here are the planning and development stages of the Teacher Performance Evaluation (TPE) system and the Administrator Performance Evaluation (APE) system that are components of the School Improvement Model project undertaken by schools in Iowa and Minnesota. One goal is an evaluation system tailored to fit the needs of the school district, supported by the board of education, planned with board representation, and congruent with the district's instructional goals and philosophy. A multistage process is described. First a steering committee is organized, representing teachers, administrators, citizens, board members, and secondary students. This committee determines scope and sequence of the system, identifies district needs, manages the timeline, and communicates with the board, superintendent, and staff. Subcommittees are appointed on philosophy and objectives, performance areas and criteria, operational procedures, forms and records, and system testing. The products of these committees are then used to develop the TPE system, including philosophy, performance areas and criteria, the evaluation cycle, and monitoring and measurement documents, and the APE system, including philosophy, performance factors, job descriptions, and lists of critical job activities. Then all components are field tested. (Author/JM)

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THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MODEL: TAILORING A TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

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Abstract

The School Improvement Model (SIM) is a total-system/outcomes-based approach to raising student achievement K-12, with emphasis on performance evaluation of all teachers and administrators.

The uniqueness of SIM is its endeavors to make four important linkages: teacher performance to student learning; administrator's behavior to teacher performance; curriculum content and student achievement; and finally, staff development. The cost of instruction, operations and interventions is also examined in this final link.

The success of the School Improvement Model depends on the process. A steering committee, consisting of representatives of the "school community" identifies district needs and tailors a system approach to evaluation to meet those needs.

THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MODEL: TAILORING A TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The public concern for accountability in education has grown rapidly in the past two decades. Much of this concern can be attributed to declining test scores, wavering public confidence in the educational system as shown by polls, several widely publicized reports of illiterate students graduating from high school and newly hired teachers failing to pass basic skills tests. Most recently there has been increased news coverage of public and legislative attentiveness to the issue of teacher competency and the demand for accountability. As a result, many school districts are seeking ways to improve their system of accountability. While evaluation of educators continues to be controversial and ill-defined, some school districts use evaluation to make personnel decisions. This is particularly true when districts are faced with declining enrollment and budget cuts which force them to make reductions in staff.

According to Richard Manatt, the primary purpose of evaluation should be to improve teacher effectiveness, not to weed out the unfit. This approach requires planning a teacher and administrator performance evaluation system that can ensure discriminating and valid results.

Such a system has been developed under the direction of Richard P. Manatt, Professor of Educational Administration at Iowa State University, and his team. This research team is

currently directing a massive School Improvement Model (SIM) project centered in the schools of Iowa and Minnesota.[1] The uniqueness of this total system/outcomes-based approach to raising student achievement K-12, is the emphasis on performance evaluation of all teachers and administrators.

The School Improvement Model endeavors to make four important linkages: In Link One, teacher performance will be described, appraised and related to student learning. Administrator's behavior, relationships to each other, to teacher performance in Link Two. Link Three required that the functional classroom curriculum (content of courses and instructional methodology) as well as the testing techniques match the goals and aims of the school "community". This third link focuses on student achievement and curriculum content. Fourth and eighth grade reading and mathematics subjects are being examined in the model.

Obviously, success of a school cannot be measured solely in terms of behaviors and achievement. Consequently, in the Fourth Link, interventions in the form of training, changes in instructional strategies and improvement of leadership will be created and provided for each school organization. In addition, the final link will examine both the cost of instruction and the expense of the model operations and interventions.

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[1] SIM is a model for the improvement of student achievement in public and independent K-12 schools. This five-year project to link administrator performance, teacher performance, student achievement and staff development is a consortium endeavor of the Minneapolis Public Schools, Northfield Public Schools, Edina Public Schools and Breck School (all in Minnesota) Spirit Lake (Iowa) Community Schools and Iowa State University. The investigation is supported by the Northwest Area Foundation and the consortium members. Richard Manatt and Shirley Stow are co-directors of SIM.

Teacher Performance Evaluation (TPE) is based upon an analysis and rating of teacher performance on a vast range of criteria that are valid (the criterion measures what it purports to measure); reliable (the criterion works every time it is used); and legally discriminating (the criterion enables the district to tell the difference between productive and unproductive teachers). Teacher performance evaluation raises the following fundamental questions:

1. What are the criteria of effective teaching?
2. How high are the district's standards?
3. How shall we monitor, report and measure a teacher's progress?
4. How do we help the teacher improve?

Administrator Performance Evaluation (APE) is based upon an analysis or measurement of progress made toward accomplishment of predetermined objectives. Performance evaluation is oriented to process and asks the following questions:

1. What do we expect each administrator to accomplish?
2. How do we expect each administrator to perform?
3. What changes in behavior do we want?
4. How does his/her performance interrelate with that of others?

Clearly, the objective of a total evaluation system must be: for teachers to improve delivery of instruction

and for administrators to improve managerial and leadership skills with the ultimate goal of improved student learning.

To be successful, an evaluation system must be tailored to fit the needs of the school district, have prior approval and support of the board of education, have broad representation in planning, and be congruent with district's instructional goals and philosophy.

The Process

A steering committee is selected and organized. These 10-20 people should represent teachers from various departments or grade levels, administrators, citizens from the community, members of the board, and students from the secondary level. This community is primarily responsible for guiding the development of the system. The major tasks for the steering committee include: determining the scope and sequence of the system, identifying needs of the district, managing the timeline and communicating (informing and consulting) with the board, superintendent and staff.

The following major responsibilities can be assigned to five subcommittees:

1. Philosophy and Objectives
   - To define what good instruction and effective administration means in the district.
   - To define reasons for evaluating district personnel.

- To decide on major responsibilities of chief executive officer, central office, and building administrators.
- To decide who and how many evaluators to use.

2. Performance Areas and Criteria
   - To determine what performance areas count and what specific criteria are needed within these areas.
3. Operational Procedures
   - To establish how to use multiple evaluators.
   - To decide how evaluation data should be gathered.
   - To decide what the cycle should be, what is considered a classroom observation, and how to give feedback and help.
   - To determine who should handle the appraisal interview.
4. Forms and Records
   - To analyze the system.
   - To determine need for difference documents for observing and reporting.
   - To define work samples.
5. Test and Try
   - To determine an appropriate test of the system

- To determine validity, reliability, and discriminating power of the criteria.
- To define orientation and training of the evaluators.
- To recommend modification of the system before the formal adoption.

After these issues have been discussed by the subcommittees, feedback is provided to the entire steering committee.

Several activities are then generated from the input provided by the various subcommittees:

A. The Teacher Performance Evaluation (TPE) System

This model includes the following components: philosophies, performance areas and criteria, evaluation cycle, and job improvement targets.

1. Philosophies of education, instruction and evaluation are developed, giving attention the purposes of the school and its programs.
2. Performance areas are identified within categories such as productive teaching techniques, positive interpersonal relations, organized/structured class management.
3. Standards are set by the school board and administration, but the steering committee's input is used to establish the evaluation cycle which often includes both formative and summative (see Figure 1). Procedures are established regarding length and frequency of classroom observations, tenured and non-tenured teachers, and due process.

Four documents must be developed for monitoring and measuring teacher performance.

(a) The Pre-observation Data Sheet provides the framework for the classroom observation and is used in the pre-observation conference. It often includes:

- the objectives of the lesson,
- teaching procedures to be used,
- teaching/learning activities,
- special characteristics or behavior of the student to be noted,
- statements that determine if the objectives have been met, and
- specific teaching behaviors to be observed.

This document prepares both the evaluator and teacher for the classroom observation.

(b) The Formative Evaluation Report contains the data gathered during the observation. The evaluator uses a legal pad for capturing data during the classroom observation. The data are later recorded on this "working document".

(c) The Summative Evaluation Report describes progress made toward achieving objectives and standard expectancies. The inference judgment made on the summative report is based on both formal and informal classroom observations. This document reflects the rating of teachers in performance areas identified earlier.

(d) The Job Improvement Target document is used to record 3-5 job targets agreed to by both teacher and evaluator. The job target states a specific objective the teacher will try to reach; set a time limit for reaching it and prescribes measurable ways to determine whether or not it has been reached. The idea is to help teachers focus on areas needing improvement, and set goals for improving teaching productivity. Evaluation occurs again at the end of the time period specified in the job target.

B. The Administrator Performance Evaluation (APE) System. This model includes the following components: a district's administrative philosophy, critical work activities, performance factors, and job improvement targets.

1. Administrative Philosophy designed to determine if each administrator's performance is consonant with the district's administrative philosophy. This philosophy should focus attention on three categories: environment created; policy, participation, and communication; program improvement.

2. Performance Factors are based on job description of an administrative position. The performance responsibilities of each position description are distributed to categories such as:

   - Improving the education process
   - Implementing district policies
   - Working with the community
   - Staff personnel
   - Managing operations

   The instrument allows the evaluator to identify strengths and weaknesses.

3. Critical Work Activities (CWAs) are those tasks deemed most essential for the performance of the position. A time log is kept by each administrator for at least one month, (three months is ideal). A compilation of the activities is made. This summary will display the key areas and average number of hours spent on each task. From this information and the original job descriptions an analysis can be made as to the manner in which time is being used.

4. Job Improvement Targets for administrators, like teachers, are developed by the evaluatee with help from the evaluator. This component is considered the "action" ingredient in the evaluation system because it ties evaluation to improvement of performance. The target should be written in terms of expected outcomes rather than as a simple activity. It must be specific, realistic, manageable, and measurable.

The APE cycle is illustrated in Figure 2.

Field Test

After the above components of both the teacher and administrator performance evaluation systems have been developed, the prototypic instruments are field-tested. During this period, parents, students, teachers and administrators input are sought. Following the field test the data are reviewed and used to refine the system. Teacher and administrators gain perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses and begin making plans for improving their skills.

The steering committee also has responsibility for planning program evaluation (achievement testing of students) and interventions in the form of training for teachers and administrators.

The normal developmental, preparation, and operational stages of the APE/TPE system take place over a three-year period. The documents are developed in year one, field tested

in year two, and implemented in year three, (see Figure 3).

Note: this time period can be shortened.

Summary

In order for a school district to meet its commitment to improving instruction and student learning, as well as accountability, there must be an evaluation system for both teachers and administrators. This system involves participation of the school community, identifying needs of the district, and tailoring a system approach to evaluation to meet those needs. The School Improvement Model has proven to be effective in accomplishing these steps for the improvement of instructional, managerial, and leadership skills.

To receive sample instruments or further information about this process write to:

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Figure 1. Flow Chart of a TPE Cycle

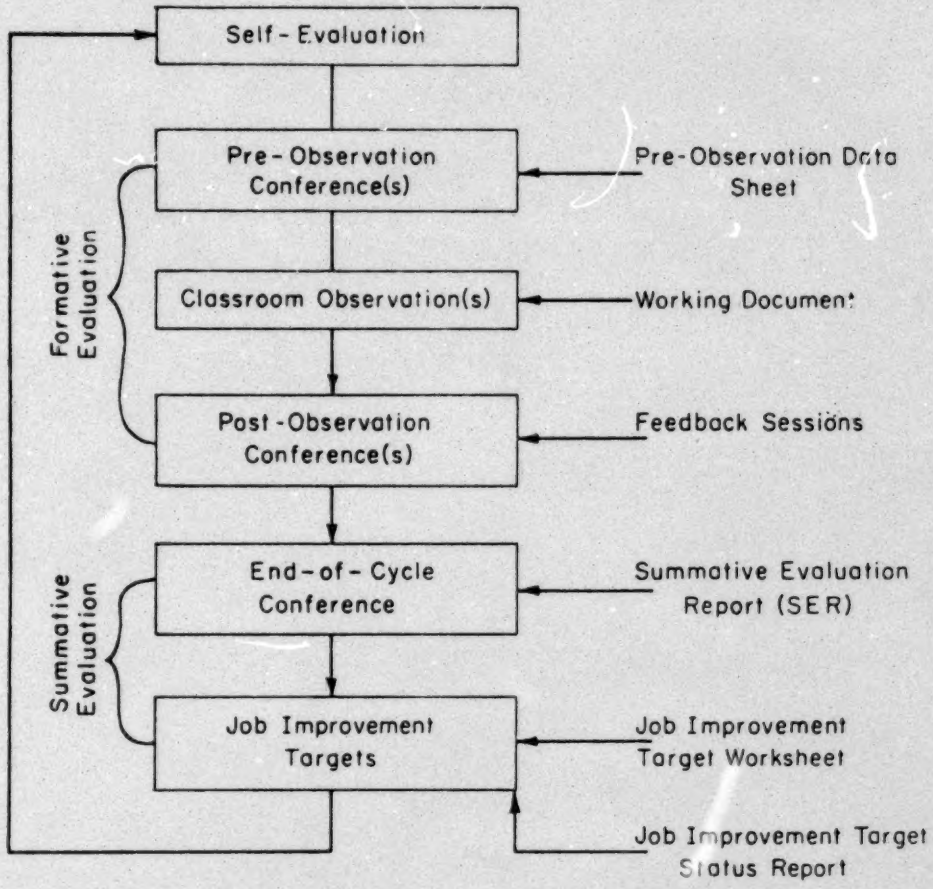

Figure 7. FLOW CHART OF AN APE CYCLE

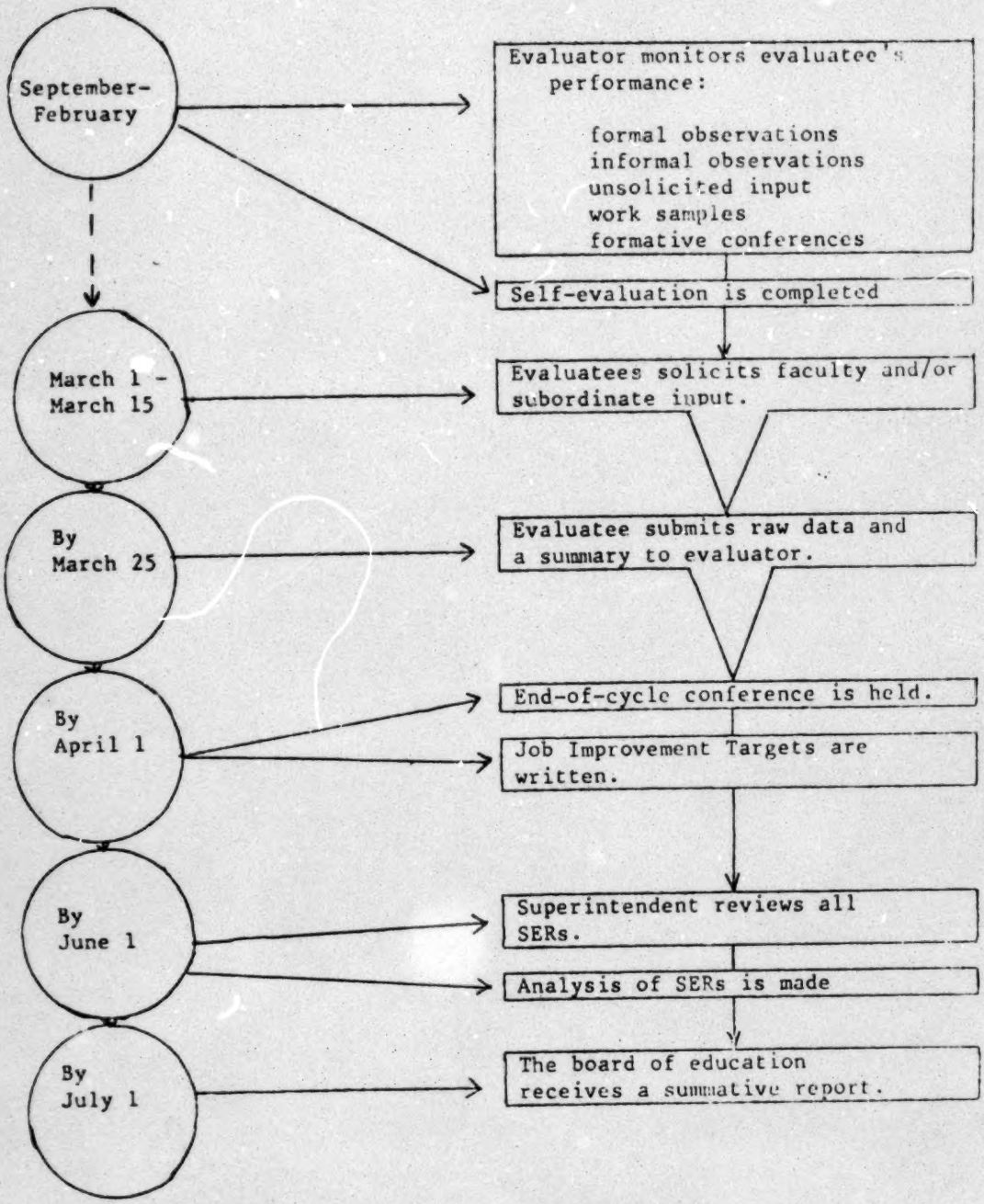

Figure 3. Developing a Performance Evaluation System